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(54) **SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR DEPOSITING COMPOUNDS IN A STRUCTURE**

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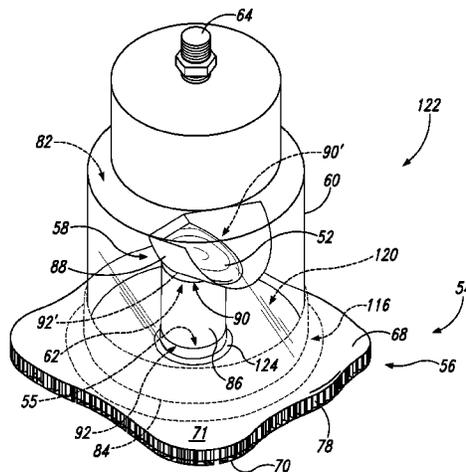
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

Presently disclosed systems and methods for depositing a compound into a void in a sandwich panel are configured to reduce the air pressure in and around the void as the compound flows into the void, thereby reducing the amount of air trapped between the compound and the sandwich panel skin within the void during the repair. Systems may include a dispenser for holding the compound, a vacuum canister, and a valve operable to allow the compound to flow from the dispenser, through at least a portion of the vacuum canister, and into the void. After the compound flows into the void, the system is configured to apply ambient air pressure to the compound and the void, before the compound is allowed to harden or cure. Some such systems are pre-filled with the compound, and/or configured to be disposable after a single use.

17 Claims, 6 Drawing Sheets



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- (52) **U.S. Cl.**
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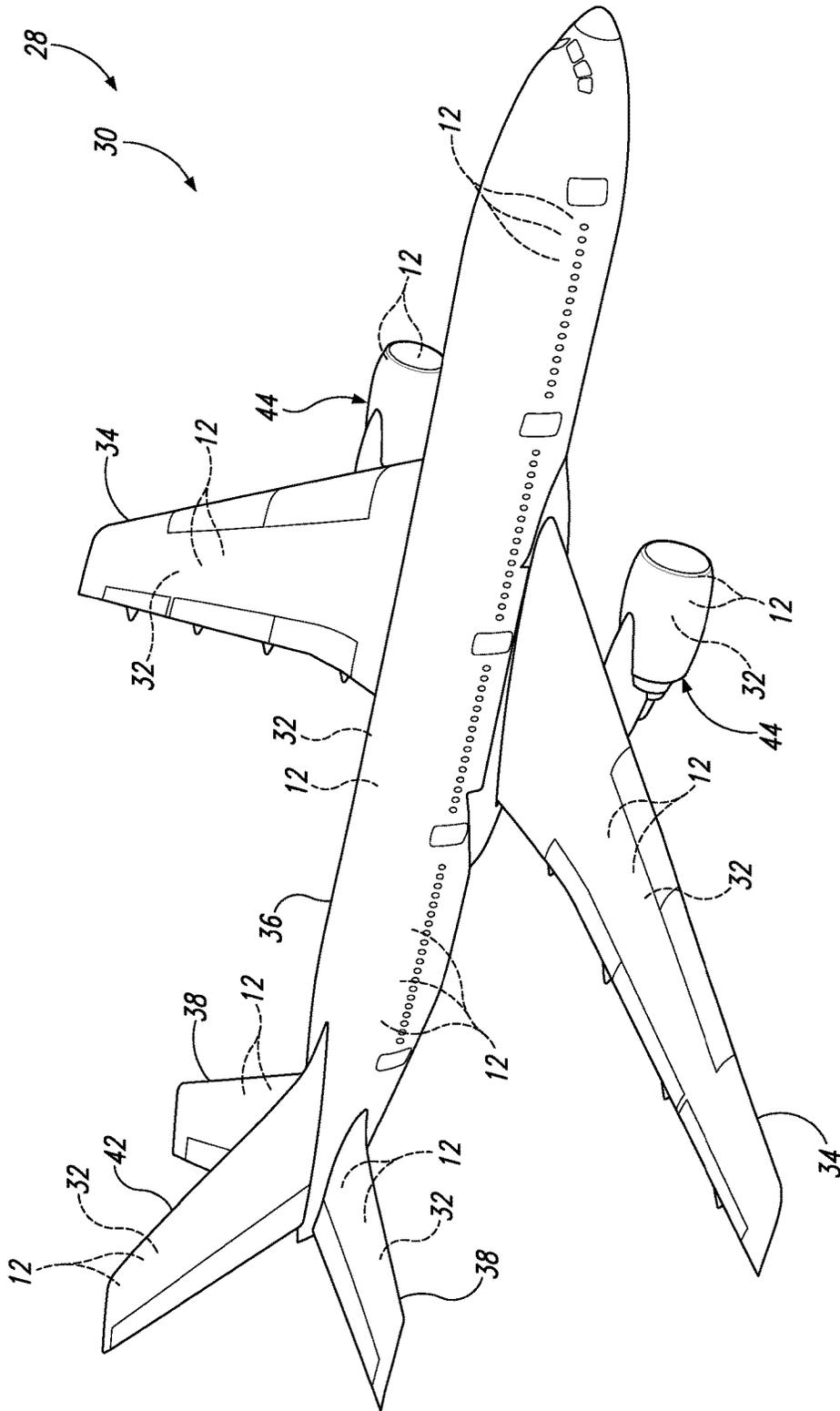


Fig. 2

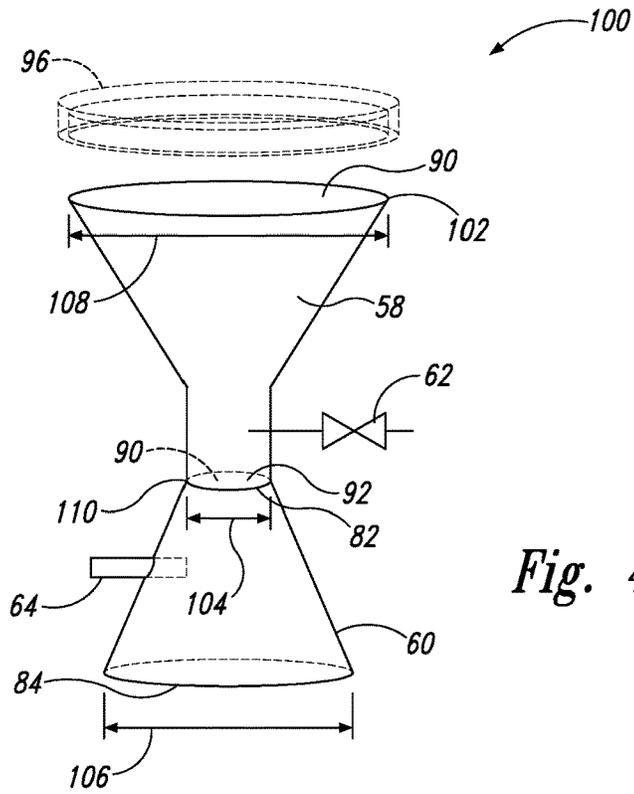


Fig. 4

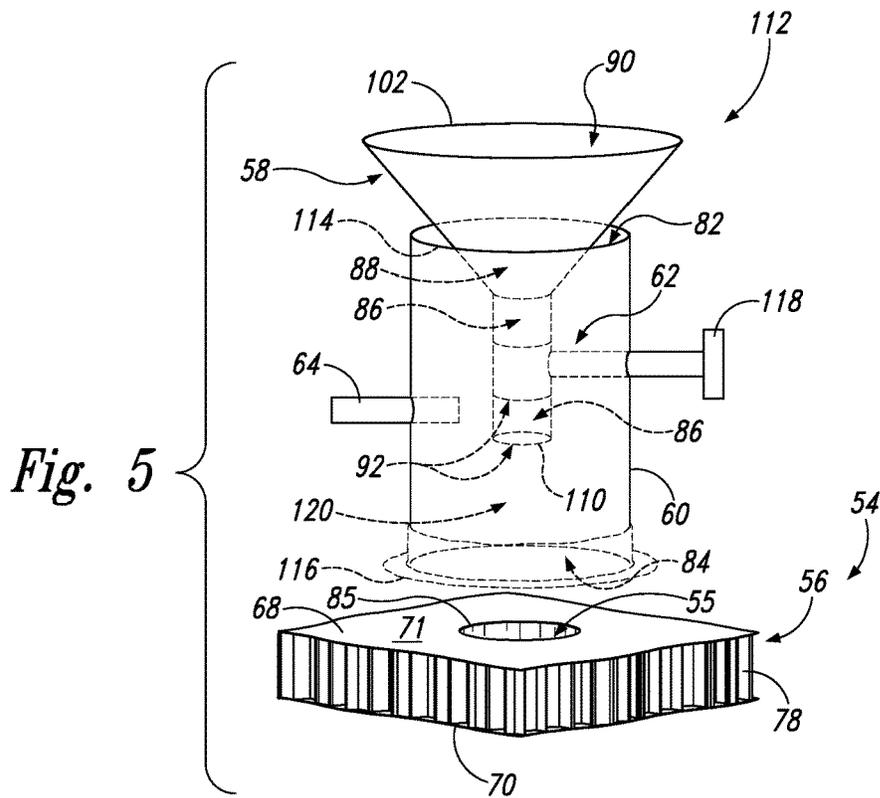
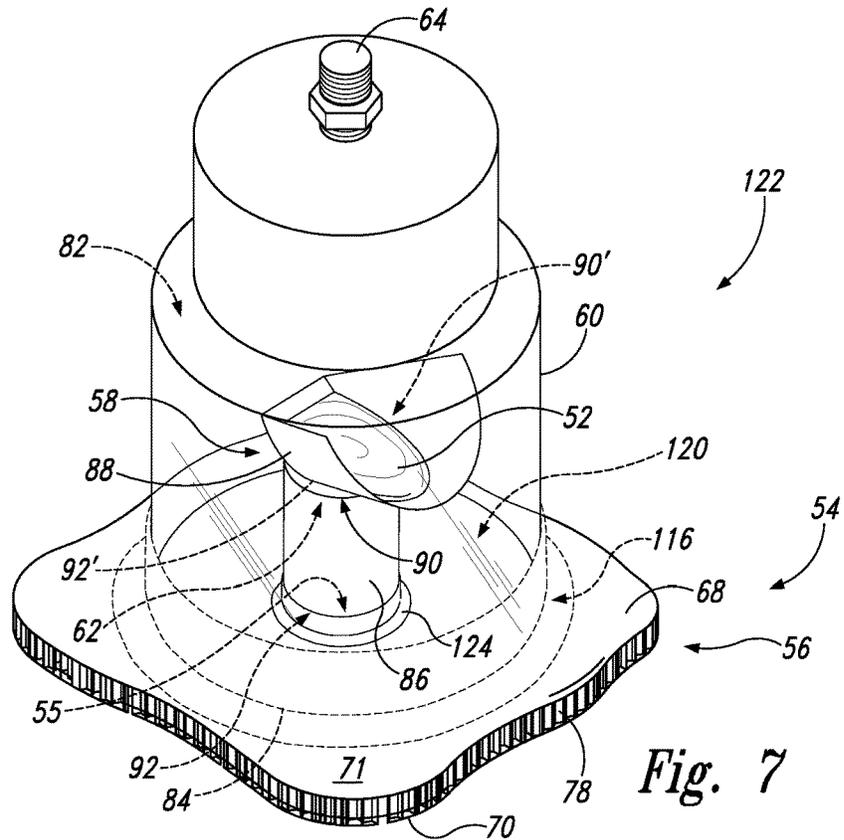
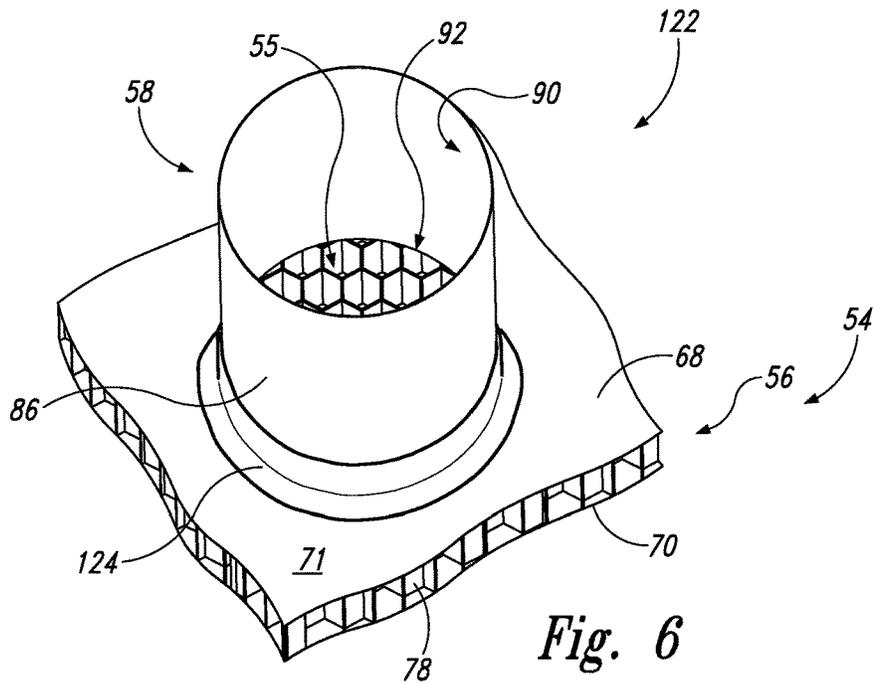


Fig. 5



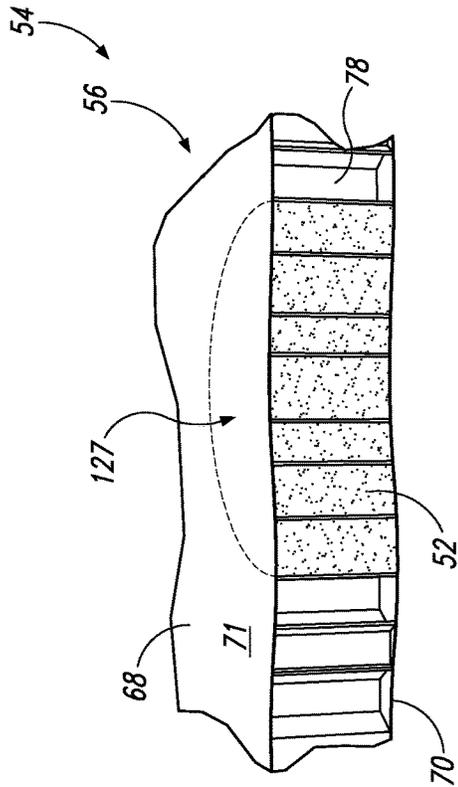


Fig. 9

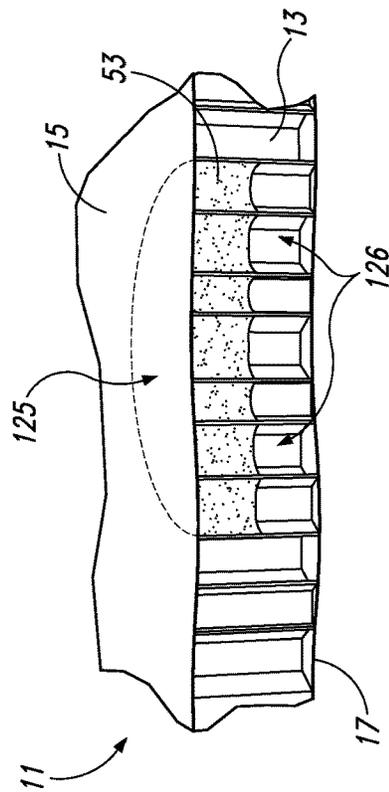


Fig. 8
(Prior Art)

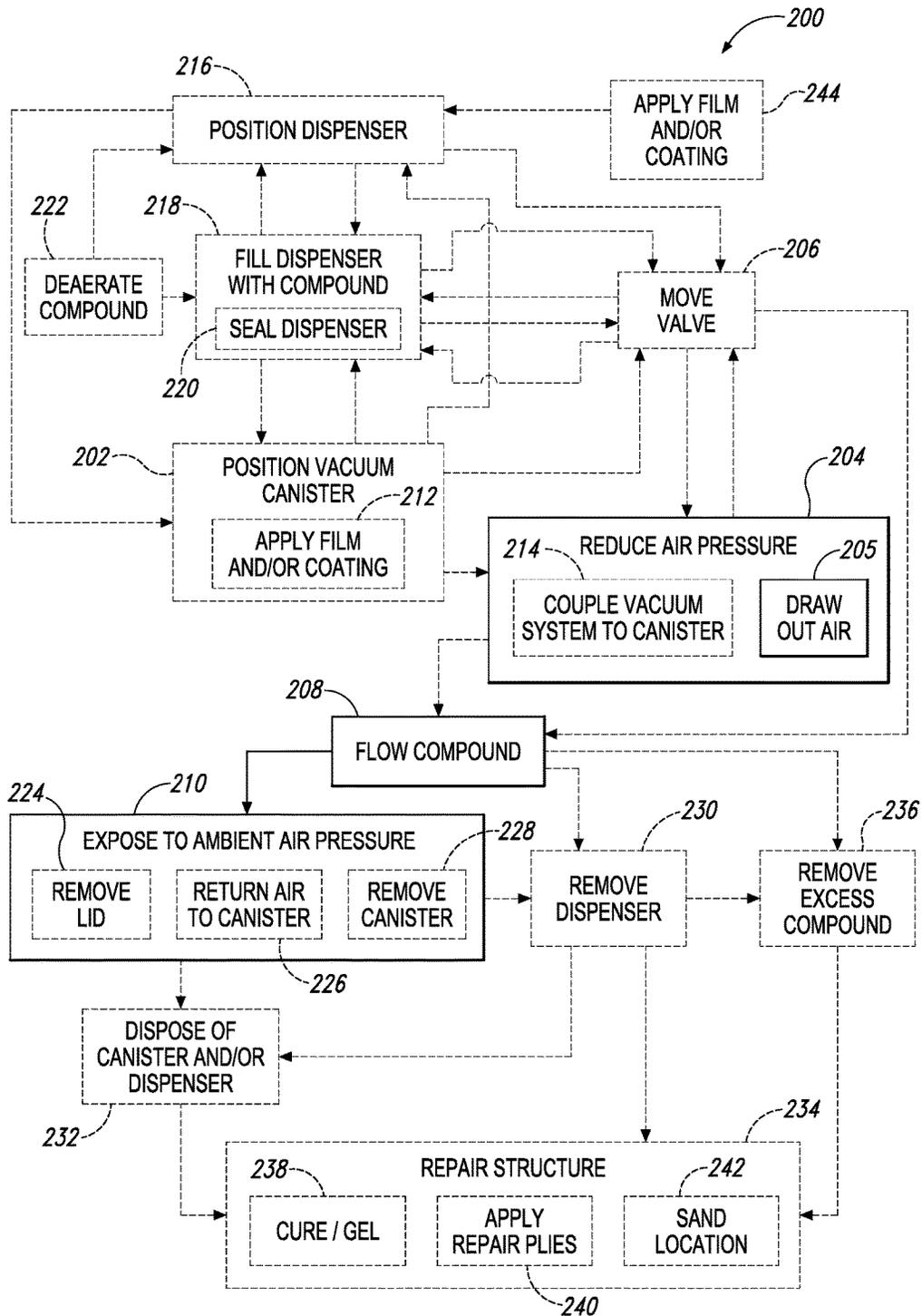


Fig. 10

1

SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR DEPOSITING COMPOUNDS IN A STRUCTURE

FIELD

The present disclosure relates to systems and methods for depositing compounds into a void within a structure, such as systems and methods for placing potting compound into a honeycomb panel.

BACKGROUND

Sandwich panels (e.g., a core structure sandwiched between two layers of material, or skins) are often used in the construction of aircraft, because they have high strength to weight ratios. FIG. 1 illustrates a conventional sandwich panel 11, shown schematically in cross-section. Sandwich panel 11 may include a core 13 sandwiched between a first skin 15 and a second skin 17. First skin 15 and second skin 17 may be rigid or semi-rigid skins, and are typically relatively thin compared to core 13, which is typically formed of a lightweight material. In the aerospace industry, such sandwich panels may be used to assemble the interior main structure and/or secondary structures of the aircraft, and/or may be used to form floor boards, wall panels, galleys, stow bins, overhead compartments, lavatories, and/or other structures within the aircraft. Such sandwich panels are also used in other industries. For example, such sandwich panels may be useful in the aerospace, automotive, electronic, construction, military, recreation, and/or motor-sport industries.

Damage to sandwich panels is typically repaired by flowing or injecting an adhesive material, such as a potting compound or epoxy, into or at the damaged area. However, the quality of these repairs may be unpredictable due to air that may become entrapped between the potting compound and a panel skin (e.g., second skin 17). The entrapped air may therefore inhibit the ability of the potting compound to completely fill the void in the sandwich panel.

SUMMARY

Presently disclosed systems and methods for depositing a compound into a void within a structure to reduce the amount of air trapped beneath potting compound deposited within a sandwich panel. For example, presently disclosed systems include a dispenser for holding the compound to be dispensed into the void, a vacuum canister, and a valve operable in a first position to retain the compound in the dispenser, and operable in a second position to enable the compound to flow into the void while the air pressure within the void is being maintained at a reduced air pressure. In some examples, the vacuum canister includes a canister inlet configured to allow the compound to flow from the dispenser into at least a portion of the vacuum canister, a canister outlet configured to allow the compound to flow into the void, and a vacuum port configured to enable a vacuum system to reduce the air pressure within the vacuum canister and the void to the reduced air pressure. The vacuum canister is configured to be selectively positioned with respect to the void such that the canister outlet circumscribes the void. In some systems, the dispenser and vacuum canister are integrally formed, and the dispenser is pre-filled with the compound. In other systems, the dispenser and vacuum canister are formed as separate components that are

2

coupled together prior to use. In some examples, at least a portion of the disclosed systems are configured to be disposable after a single use.

Presently disclosed methods for depositing a compound into a void within a structure include positioning a vacuum canister with respect to the void such that a canister outlet of the vacuum canister circumscribes the void, and drawing air out of the vacuum canister and the void such that a pre-determined reduced air pressure is maintained within the vacuum canister (compared to ambient air). Air may be drawn out of the vacuum canister using a vacuum system operably coupled to the vacuum canister via a vacuum port. The pre-determined reduced air pressure may be referred to as a "target air pressure" or a "target reduced air pressure." Methods also include moving a valve from a first position to a second position during a period of time in which the target air pressure is maintained, and exposing the compound and the void to ambient air pressure after the period of time during which the pre-determined reduced air pressure is maintained. The reduced air pressure is maintained for a period of time that is sufficient to allow the compound to flow from the dispenser into the void. The exposing the compound and the void to the ambient air pressure is performed before the compound has dried, gelled, or cured. Moving the valve from the first position to the second position is configured to allow the compound to flow from the dispenser, through at least a portion of the vacuum canister, and into the void. In this manner, voids in sandwich panels may be repaired with improved results, as compared to conventional techniques.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a schematic, cross-section view of a conventional sandwich panel.

FIG. 2 is a perspective, schematic view of illustrative, non-exclusive examples of an apparatus that may include one or more structures repaired and/or manufactured according to the present disclosure.

FIG. 3 is a schematic view of illustrative, non-exclusive examples of systems for depositing a compound within a void in a structure, according to the present disclosure.

FIG. 4 is a schematic elevation view of illustrative, non-exclusive examples of systems for depositing a compound within a void in a structure, according to the present disclosure.

FIG. 5 is a schematic elevation view of illustrative, non-exclusive examples of systems for depositing a compound within a void in a structure, according to the present disclosure.

FIG. 6 is a schematic perspective view of an illustrative, non-exclusive example of a portion of a dispenser, according to the present disclosure.

FIG. 7 is a perspective, schematic view of an illustrative non-exclusive example of a system according to the present disclosure, with a vacuum canister surrounding a two-part dispenser, including the portion of the dispenser illustrated in FIG. 6.

FIG. 8 is a perspective view of a portion of a honeycomb panel that has been repaired using conventional methods, showing air pockets present within the compound that has been deposited in the honeycomb panel.

FIG. 9 is a perspective view of a portion of a honeycomb panel that has been repaired using systems and methods according to the present disclosure, showing the improvement in results.

FIG. 10 is a schematic, flow chart diagram, illustrating methods of depositing compounds according to the present disclosure.

DESCRIPTION

Systems and methods for depositing a compound into a void within a structure are disclosed. Examples are generally disclosed as depositing a potting compound into a honeycomb sandwich panel, but depositing other compounds into other structures is also within the scope of the present disclosure. Generally, in the figures, elements that are likely to be included in a given example are illustrated in solid lines, while elements that are optional to a given example are illustrated in broken lines. However, elements that are illustrated in solid lines are not essential to all examples of the present disclosure, and an element shown in solid lines may be omitted from a particular example without departing from the scope of the present disclosure.

With reference to FIG. 2, an example of an apparatus 28 that may include one or more sandwich panels 12 generally is illustrated in the form of an aircraft 30. Aircraft 30 may take any suitable form, including commercial aircraft, military aircraft, or any other suitable aircraft. While FIG. 2 illustrates an aircraft 30 in the form of a fixed wing aircraft, other types and configurations of aircraft are within the scope of aircraft 30 according to the present disclosure, including (but not limited to) rotorcraft and helicopters.

Apparatus 28 (e.g., aircraft 30) may include one or more structures 32 formed from one or more sandwich panels 12, one or more of which may be composite panels. Each sandwich panel 12 includes a core formed of a relatively lightweight material, sandwiched between two panel skins. Structures 32 may include one or more sandwich panels 12, joints formed between two or more sandwich panels 12, and/or three-dimensional structures formed using one or more sandwich panels 12. As illustrative, non-exclusive examples, structures 32 may be utilized in such aircraft structures as wings 34, fuselages 36, horizontal stabilizers 38, vertical stabilizers 42, and engine housings 44; however, other components of aircraft 30 additionally or alternatively may include structures 32 such as sandwich panels 12 and/or joints formed between two or more sandwich panels 12. Other applications in aircraft 30 for sandwich panels 12 include overhead storage bins, floor panels, interior walls, food handling galley assemblies, wing control surfaces, passenger storage racks, thrust deflector assemblies, capsule panels, ablative shields for nose cones, instrumentation enclosures and shelves, and bulkhead panels. In other industries, apparatus 28 (including one or more sandwich panels 12) may include or be a portion of space satellites, electronic radome construction, transit vehicles, shipping containers, shelters, large antennae or disk reflectors, refrigeration panels, rapid transit floor panels, shipboard electronic deck shelters, cargo pallets, automobile bodies, architectural curtain walls, partitions, divider panels, expandable hospital shelters, and/or interior structures of an assembly.

Damage to sandwich panels 12 may be repaired using systems and methods according to the present disclosure. FIG. 3 shows a schematic representation of systems 50 for depositing a compound 52 into a structure 54 (which is an example of structure 32), such as into a void 55 of a sandwich panel 56 (of which sandwich panel 12 is an example). Systems 50 generally include a dispenser 58 for holding compound 52, a vacuum canister 60, and a valve 62. Generally, dispenser 58 is configured to deliver compound 52 to a location of structure 54 (e.g., to void 55) while under

reduced air pressure. Vacuum canister 60 includes a vacuum port 64 that is configured to enable a vacuum system 66 to reduce the air pressure within vacuum canister 60 and void 55 to a target air pressure. For example, once an external vacuum system 66 is selectively operatively coupled to vacuum canister 60 via vacuum port 64, vacuum system 66 draws air out from within vacuum canister 60 and void 55. Systems 50 are configured to maintain a desired or predetermined reduced air pressure for a period of time sufficient to allow compound 52 to flow from dispenser 58 into void 55. After compound 52 is delivered or deposited or flowed to the desired location (e.g., to void 55), ambient air pressure is restored in vacuum canister 60, and thereby void 55 and compound 52 are exposed to ambient air pressure that compresses pockets of air trapped between compound 52 and a panel skin (e.g., a second skin layer 70), thereby reducing the size of said pockets of air. For example, vacuum system 66 is decoupled from vacuum port 64 and/or vacuum system 66 is reversed such that air is pumped back into vacuum canister 60. Vacuum port 64 is coupled to vacuum canister 60, formed integrally with vacuum canister 60, and/or removable from vacuum canister 60. The repair is typically untouched for a sufficient time to enable compound 52 to completely cure.

Still with reference to FIG. 3, sandwich panel 56 includes a first skin layer 68 and second skin layer 70. First skin layer 68 has a first outer surface 71 and a first inner surface 72. Similarly, second skin layer 70 has a second outer surface 74 and a second inner surface 76. A core 78 extends between first inner surface 72 and second inner surface 76, such that first skin layer 68 and second skin layer 70 are positioned on opposites sides of core 78 from one another. First skin layer 68 is arranged such that first outer surface 71 faces outwardly and away from core 78. Similarly, second skin layer 70 is arranged such that second outer surface 74 faces outwardly and away from core 78. Sandwich panel 56 is formed of any suitable materials, having a flexible, rigid, or semi-rigid first skin layer 68, and a flexible, rigid, or semi-rigid second skin layer 70, and core 78 there between.

Generally, first skin layer 68 and second skin layer 70 are relatively thin sheets or plates, while core 78 may have a thickness that is significantly greater than the respective thicknesses of first skin layer 68 and second skin layer 70. In some examples, the density of core 78 is less than that of first skin layer 68 and second skin layer 70. For example, in the exemplary embodiment, core 78 is formed of a lightweight material formed into a plurality of elongate cells having hexagonal or rectangular cross-sections. Such cores 78 are referred to as honeycomb cores, but other shapes and configurations also may be used, such as a corrugated structure and/or foam materials. Cores 78 of sandwich panels 56 may include an open-cell structure and/or a closed-cell structure. Cores 78 of sandwich panels 56 may be formed of foam, aluminum, Nomex® (aramid), carbon, Korex, Kevlar®, fiberglass, polyethersulfone, polyvinylchloride, polyurethane, polyethylene foam, polystyrene foam, balsa wood, syntactic foam, a honeycomb structure, a polymer honeycomb, a thermoplastic honeycomb, stainless steel, polycarbonate, and/or polypropylene. Sandwich panel 56 is, for example, a honeycomb core sandwich panel, but other constructions are contemplated within the scope of the present disclosure. First skin layer 68 and second skin layer 70 may be, a laminate of fiberglass-reinforced polymer, a laminate of carbon fiber-reinforced polymer, a thermoset polymer, an epoxy, sheet metal, carbon, aramid, aluminum, steel, plywood, balsa, teak, and/or hardwood.

Void 55 may be, for example, a damaged area of sandwich panel 56. Void 55 may include a damaged portion of first skin 68, second skin 70, and/or core 78, and may extend through a portion of the thickness of sandwich panel 56 or all the way through sandwich panel 56. Dispenser 58 is configured to contain a sufficient volume of compound 52 to fill and/or repair void 55 of sandwich panel 56. Valve 62 is operable in a first position to retain compound 52 in dispenser 58 and operable in a second position to enable compound 52 to flow into void 55 while the air pressure within void 55 is being maintained at a reduced air pressure. For example, compound 52 flows generally in the direction indicated by arrow 80—from dispenser 58, through at least a portion of vacuum canister 60, and into void 55.

Vacuum canister 60 includes a canister inlet 82 configured to allow compound 52 to flow from dispenser 58 into at least a portion of vacuum canister 60. Vacuum canister 60 also includes a canister outlet 84 configured to allow compound 52 to flow into void 55 (e.g., out of vacuum canister 60). Vacuum canister 60 is configured to be selectively positioned with respect to void 55 such that canister outlet 84 circumscribes void 55. Canister outlet 84 is said to circumscribe void 55 when an outer perimeter of canister outlet 84 is positioned with respect to structure 54 such that canister outlet 84 surrounds an opening 85 through first outer surface 71 of sandwich panel 56 which forms part of void 55. For example, canister outlet 84 includes an opening that is at least as large as opening 85 of void 55, such that canister outlet 84 surrounds opening 85 and such that a seal is formed between canister outlet 84 and first outer surface 71 when a vacuum is applied. In the exemplary embodiment, canister outlet 84 is approximately the same size and shape as opening 85 of void 55. Optionally, canister outlet 84 is larger than opening 85 of void 55 and/or a different shape. In some examples, vacuum canister 60 is positioned with respect to first outer surface 71 of sandwich panel 56 such that canister outlet 84 is adjacent to and in physical contact with first outer surface 71. In some examples, vacuum canister 60 (e.g., canister outlet 84 of vacuum canister 60) is positioned on sandwich panel 56 (e.g., on first outer surface 71). A seal is then formed between vacuum canister 60 and structure 54 (e.g., between canister outlet 84 and sandwich panel 56) such that air is substantially prevented from entering vacuum canister 60 at the intersection of vacuum canister 60 and sandwich panel 56 (e.g., systems 50 include an air-impermeable seal between structure 54 and vacuum canister 60). Such seals may include, for example, a gasket, a sealant tape, an adhesive, a sealant compound, and/or a film. In some examples, vacuum canister 60 may surround at least a portion of dispenser 58, and/or dispenser 58 may be contained within a volume defined between vacuum canister 60 and structure 54.

Vacuum canister 60 (e.g., canister inlet 82) may be configured to selectively and removably receive at least a portion of dispenser 58. For example, at least a portion of dispenser 58 may be inserted into or through canister inlet 82, and/or at least a portion of dispenser 58 may be contained within vacuum canister 60. Additionally or alternatively, canister inlet 82 may be configured to receive compound 52 from dispenser 58. In other words, compound 52 may flow directly into vacuum canister 60 by flowing directly through canister inlet 82, and/or compound 52 may flow into vacuum canister 60 indirectly, by flowing through a portion of dispenser 58 that is positioned within canister inlet 82.

In one example, dispenser 58 includes a dispenser inlet 90 to receive compound 52 and a dispenser outlet 92 configured

to channel compound 52 toward void 55. In some examples, dispenser outlet 92 is configured to channel compound 52 into vacuum canister 60. In some examples, dispenser inlet 90 and dispenser outlet 92 are different from each other. In other examples, the same opening serves as dispenser inlet 90 and dispenser outlet 92. For example, dispenser 58 may include a single opening (e.g., dispenser outlet 92) that is configured to both receive compound 52 into dispenser 58, and allow compound 52 to exit dispenser 58 and flow towards void 55.

In some systems 50, dispenser 58 is a two-part dispenser. For example, dispenser 58 may include a first portion 86 and a second portion 88. In some examples, second portion 88 is configured to hold a volume of compound 52 and deliver that volume to first portion 86, while first portion 86 is configured to be positioned with respect to void 55 such that compound 52 flows through first portion 86 to void 55. Second portion 88 is pre-filled with compound 52, or second portion 88 is filled with compound 52 at the time of use, such as through dispenser inlet 90. In some systems 50, second portion 88 includes a first dispenser inlet 90 for receiving compound 52, and first portion 86 includes a second dispenser inlet 90 for receiving compound 52 from second portion 88.

In some examples, dispenser outlet 92 is positioned between second portion 88 and first portion 86 such that dispenser outlet 92 is configured to channel compound 52 from second portion 88 into first portion 86 (e.g., into a respective dispenser inlet 90 of first portion 86). Additionally or alternatively, dispenser outlet 92 is configured to channel compound 52 from first portion 86, through at least a portion of vacuum canister 60 (e.g., dispenser 58 may include a plurality of dispenser outlets 92 in some examples, such as a first dispenser outlet 92 formed in second portion 88 that leads to first portion 86, and a second dispenser outlet 92 formed in first portion 86 that leads to structure 54). First portion 86 is configured to be positioned on structure 54 (e.g., on first outer surface 71 of sandwich panel 56), such that first portion 86 surrounds void 55. In some such systems 50, a dispenser outlet 92 of first portion 86 is positioned facing and/or adjacent structure 54, such that the dispenser outlet circumscribes void 55 (e.g., opening 85 of void 55). Such dispenser outlet 92 is approximately the same size and shape of void 55 in some examples, or the dispenser outlet is larger than void 55 and/or differently shaped in other examples. First portion 86 is removably coupled to structure 54, such as to first outer surface 71 of first skin 68 of sandwich panel 56. For example, first portion 86 is configured to be coupled to structure 54 with one or more of a gasket, a seal, a fitting, a film, a coating, an adhesive, a sealant, and a tape.

In some systems 50 having a two-part dispenser, first portion 86 and second portion 88 are selectively removable from each other. For example, first portion 86 of dispenser 58 is configured to selectively and removably receive at least some of second portion 88 of dispenser 58. Additionally, second portion 88 is configured to be removably placed onto first portion 86, and/or second portion 88 may be configured to be removably coupled to first portion 86. In yet other examples, first portion 86 and second portion 88 are integrally formed.

In systems 50 where dispenser 58 is a two-part dispenser, the two parts are shaped differently to facilitate their functioning. For example, first portion 86 is substantially cylindrical in some examples. Second portion 88 is a funnel or substantially funnel-shaped in some examples. Dispenser 58

(e.g., first portion **86** and/or second portion **88**) is sized to hold a sufficient volume of compound **52** to repair void **55**.

One or more valves **62** are positioned between vacuum canister **60** and dispenser **58** in some examples. Additionally or alternatively, one or more valves **62** are positioned between second portion **88** of dispenser **58** and first portion **86** of dispenser **58**. Additionally or alternatively, one or more valves **62** are positioned between first portion **86** of dispenser **58** and vacuum canister **60**. In some examples, one or more valves **62** are coupled to dispenser **58**, or form a portion thereof. One or more valves **62** are selectively moveable such that compound **52** is retained in at least a portion of dispenser **58** when valve **62** is in the first position (e.g., valve **62** is configured to at least substantially prevent flow of compound **52** through dispenser outlet **92** when valve **62** is in the first position), and such that compound **52** flows towards void **55** when valve **62** is in the second position. For example, moving valve **62** to the second position allows compound **52** to flow through dispenser outlet **92** and into, e.g., first portion **86** of dispenser **58** and/or vacuum canister **60**. In some examples, moving valve **62** to the second position includes selectively removing valve **62** from dispenser **58** entirely, such that valve **62** is remote from dispenser **58** and dispenser outlet **92**. In some of these examples, valve **62** is selectively replaceable on dispenser outlet **92**.

In some examples, valve **62** is a simple mechanical structure, such as a tape, an adhesive, a hinge, a sliding structure, a cover, a pivoting structure, a ball valve, a butterfly valve, a check valve, a disc valve, a diaphragm valve, and a snap-fit structure. Any valve structure that is configured to function as described may be used for valve **62**. In some systems **50**, valve **62** is configured to be moved between the first position and the second position by remote activation. Additionally or alternatively, valve **62** is selectively moveable to the second position by manual manipulation of valve **62**. In some examples, valve **62** is configured to be selectively moved to the second position by an actuator. In yet other examples, valve **62** is configured such that it automatically moves to the second position (e.g., allowing flow of compound **52** out of dispenser **58**) when a target reduced air pressure is reached inside vacuum canister **60**. Valve **62** is moved to the second position at any suitable point in the process for various systems, such as before vacuum canister **60** is placed with respect to structure **54**, when a second portion **88** of dispenser **58** is positioned with respect to a first portion **86**, and/or when dispenser **58** is positioned with respect to vacuum canister **60**.

As indicated by dashed line, dispenser **58** and vacuum canister **60** may be formed unitarily with each other such that dispenser **58** and vacuum canister **60** are formed as a unitary assembly **94**. For example, in some systems **50**, dispenser **58** and vacuum canister **60** are formed integrally with one another. In other examples, dispenser **58** and vacuum canister **60** are coupled to one another and/or formed separately from one another.

Vacuum system **66** may be configured to reduce the air pressure within vacuum canister **60** until the air pressure within vacuum canister **60** reaches a prescribed (e.g., predetermined) target pressure. The target pressure will be determined by the viscosity of the potting compound and the depth and the cross section of the structure and damage to be repaired. In practice the target air pressure may fall within the range of 10-29 inches of mercury ("in Hg") below atmospheric pressure for common potting compounds used for repair of honeycomb panels between 2 and 6 inches thick. Vacuum system **66** is configured to reduce the air

pressure within vacuum canister **60** and is configured to maintain the target reduced air pressure for a prescribed duration of time sufficient to allow the potting compound to flow into the void. In practice the target air pressure may be maintained long enough for common potting compounds used for repair of honeycomb core panels between 2 and 6 inches thick, leaving sufficient time before the potting compound cures and hardens, for voids between the potting compound to be compressed when ambient pressure is restored to the repaired area. Vacuum system **66** is also configured to restore ambient air pressure within vacuum canister **60** at a prescribed rate. Vacuum system **66** may be manually controlled and/or computer-controlled.

Dispenser **58** and vacuum canister **60** may be any suitable size and shape. Compound **52** is any suitable compound for repairing void **55**, such as an adhesive, a potting compound, a UV-cure compound, and/or a quick-cure compound. Compound **52** is configured to flow from dispenser **58** into void **55** (e.g., compound **52** has a viscosity such that it flows through dispenser outlet **92**, through at least a portion of vacuum canister **60**, and into void **55**).

Systems **50** may be fabricated using one or more disposable components. For example, in some examples, dispenser **58** is configured to be disposed of after a single use. Additionally or alternatively, vacuum canister **60** is configured to be disposed of after a single use. In some examples, system **50** is configured to include an integrally-formed dispenser **58** and vacuum canister **60** assembly **94** that is pre-filled with compound **52** in dispenser **58**, where the entire assembly **94** is configured to be disposable after a single use. For example, assembly **94** is coupled to vacuum system **66** via vacuum port **64**, the compound **52** already contained within dispenser **58** of assembly **94** flows to void **55**, and then assembly **94** is decoupled from vacuum system **66** and disposed of.

In some systems **50**, dispenser **58** includes a cover or lid **96**, which is configured to cover or seal dispenser inlet **90**. Lid **96** is removable in some examples, such that it is configured to selectively cover dispenser inlet **90**. For example, dispenser inlet **90** receives compound **52** into dispenser **58** when lid **96** is removed, and lid **96** is configured to prevent compound **52** from flowing through dispenser inlet **90** when lid **96** is positioned to cover dispenser inlet **90**. Additionally or alternatively, systems **50** may include a dispenser seal **98** configured to selectively seal dispenser inlet **90**, such that dispenser inlet **90** may receive compound **52** into dispenser **58** before dispenser inlet **90** is sealed with dispenser seal **98**, and dispenser seal **98** is configured to prevent compound **52** from flowing through dispenser inlet **90** once dispenser inlet **90** is sealed with dispenser seal **98**.

Components may be combined, joined, and/or take other forms, to perform the same functions as described above. Presently disclosed systems **50** may have particular utility in repairing sandwich panels where only one side of the sandwich panel may be accessible. Moreover, if damage extends from through the first skin layer **68** through the second skin layer **70**, a temporary plastic film or sealant, for example, may be used to temporarily seal the opening to enable the pressure within the panel to be reduced.

Turning now to FIGS. 4-7, illustrative non-exclusive examples of systems **50** are illustrated. While FIGS. 4-7 are less schematic than FIG. 3, they are still schematic in nature. Where appropriate, the reference numerals from the schematic illustration of FIG. 3 are used to designate corresponding parts of the examples of FIGS. 4-7; however, the examples of FIGS. 4-7 are non-exclusive and do not limit

systems 50 to the illustrated embodiments of FIGS. 4-7. That is, systems 50 are not limited to the specific embodiments of FIGS. 4-7, and systems 50 may incorporate any number of the various aspects, configurations, characteristics, properties, etc. of systems 50 that are illustrated in and discussed with reference to the schematic representation of FIG. 3 and/or the embodiments of FIGS. 4-7, as well as variations thereof, without requiring the inclusion of all such aspects, configurations, characteristics, properties, etc. For the purpose of brevity, each previously discussed component, part, portion, aspect, region, etc. or variants thereof may not be discussed, illustrated, and/or labeled again with respect to the examples of FIGS. 4-7; however, it is within the scope of the present disclosure that the previously discussed features, variants, etc. may be utilized with the examples of FIGS. 4-7.

FIG. 4 illustrates an example of system 50, in the form of a system 100. System 100 includes dispenser 58 and vacuum canister 60, with valve 62 positioned between dispenser 58 and vacuum canister 60. Vacuum port 64 is coupled to vacuum canister 60 to enable a vacuum system (e.g., vacuum system 66 of FIG. 3) to be coupled to system 100. Dispenser 58 may include lid 96, or may be sealed at an end 102. As shown in FIG. 4, a first diameter 104 of canister inlet 82 is smaller than a second diameter 106 of canister outlet 84. Dispenser outlet 92 has a smaller diameter than the diameter of end 102 of dispenser 58. In some examples, the diameter of dispenser outlet 92 is substantially equal to the diameter of canister inlet 82 (e.g., first diameter 104), and/or the diameter adjacent end 102 may be a larger, third diameter 108 (which may be smaller than, approximately equal to, or larger than second diameter 106 of canister outlet 84). Canister inlet 82 is configured to receive the compound from dispenser 58.

Dispenser 58 may be coupled to vacuum canister 60, formed integrally with vacuum canister 60, and/or selectively removable from vacuum canister 60. In examples where dispenser 58 is formed integrally with vacuum canister 60, dispenser outlet 92 is adjacent canister inlet 82, with dispenser inlet 90 being adjacent end 102 of dispenser 58. In such examples, dispenser 58 is pre-filled with compound (e.g., compound 52) and sealed at end 102, or the compound is placed into dispenser 58 through dispenser inlet 90, adjacent end 102, and then covered with lid 96 or otherwise sealed. The compound flows through dispenser outlet 92 and into vacuum canister 60 via canister inlet 82 when valve 62 is positioned to allow such flow.

In some examples where dispenser 58 is coupled to vacuum canister 60, end 102 of dispenser 58 is sealed, and the same opening serves as dispenser inlet 90 and dispenser outlet 92. For example, dispenser 58 is at least partially filled with compound through dispenser inlet 90 adjacent a second end 110 of dispenser 58, and then dispenser 58 is coupled to vacuum canister 60 adjacent the same second end 110. Once valve 62 is moved to the second position, the compound flows through the same opening through which it was inserted into dispenser 58 (e.g., the compound flows through dispenser inlet 90, now serving as dispenser outlet 92, adjacent second end 110) and into vacuum canister 60, towards the structure or void adjacent which system 100 is positioned or coupled.

Alternatively, dispenser 58 may be coupled to vacuum canister 60 before or after compound has been placed in dispenser 58, and dispenser inlet 90 and dispenser outlet 92 are positioned on opposite ends of dispenser 58. In some examples, the compound is inserted into dispenser 58 through dispenser inlet 90 adjacent end 102, and then

dispenser 58 is coupled to vacuum canister 60 adjacent second end 110 of dispenser 58. In other examples, dispenser 58 is coupled to vacuum canister 60 adjacent second end 110 of dispenser 58, and then dispenser 58 is at least partially filled with compound through dispenser inlet 90, adjacent end 102 of dispenser 58. Whether dispenser 58 is filled with compound before or after dispenser 58 is coupled to vacuum canister 60 in these examples, system 100 is configured such that the compound enters dispenser 58 through a different location (e.g., dispenser inlet 90) than it exits dispenser 58 (e.g., dispenser outlet 92 is different from dispenser inlet 90). Dispenser inlet 90 and dispenser outlet 92 are positioned at other locations of dispenser 58, other than end 102 and second end 110 in some examples. Dispenser 58 and vacuum canister 60 may be arranged with respect to one another such that gravity causes the compound to flow from dispenser 58 towards the void or structure, such as from dispenser outlet 92 into canister inlet 82.

In one example, system 100 is configured to be disposable after a single use. For example, dispenser 58 is pre-filled with compound, with dispenser 58 and vacuum canister 60 formed integrally or pre-coupled together. Such system 100 is used "off-the-shelf," simply by connecting a vacuum system via vacuum port 64, positioning the system 100 with respect to a void to be repaired, and moving valve 62 to allow the compound to flow from dispenser 58, through vacuum canister 60, and into the void, while under vacuum. Once the compound has flowed to the void, system 100 is removed from the structure and disposed of, and the void is exposed to ambient air pressure, and/or the vacuum system may pump air back into vacuum canister 60 to expose the void and compound to an increased air pressure to further compress air trapped between and potting compound and the second side of the core before system 100 is removed from the structure.

FIG. 5 schematically illustrates a second system 112, which is another example of system 50. System 112 includes dispenser 58 and vacuum canister 60, which are configured to deliver a compound (e.g., compound 52) to structure 54 (e.g., to void 55 of sandwich panel 56). Dispenser 58 includes dispenser inlet 90, through which the compound is inserted into dispenser 58, and dispenser outlet 92, through which the compound may exit dispenser 58. At least a portion of dispenser 58 is positioned within vacuum canister 60. As shown in FIG. 5, canister inlet 82 is configured to receive at least a part of dispenser 58, such that dispenser 58 is at least partially inserted into vacuum canister 60 through canister inlet 82. In the exemplary embodiment, system 112 includes a seal 114 adjacent canister inlet 82 such that substantially no air passes between seal 114 and dispenser 58 when dispenser 58 is so positioned.

Vacuum canister 60 is positioned with respect to structure 54 such that canister outlet 84 circumscribes void 55. In some examples, vacuum canister 60 is positioned on structure 54, such as on first outer surface 71 of first skin layer 68 of sandwich panel 56. A lower seal 116 is positioned between vacuum canister 60 and sandwich panel 56 adjacent canister outlet 84. Lower seal 116 is configured such that substantially no air passes between first outer surface 71 and canister outlet 84. Dispenser 58 is positioned with respect to vacuum canister 60 such that dispenser outlet 92 is positioned within vacuum canister 60. When valve 62 is moved from a first position wherein the compound is retained in dispenser 58 to a second position, the compound flows through dispenser outlet 92, through at least a portion of vacuum canister 60, and into void 55. Valve 62 is operable,

11

such as by a handle or other interface 118 that is accessible outside vacuum canister 60. In this manner, valve 62 is moved (e.g., selectively opened and/or closed) while there is a target reduced air pressure within vacuum canister 60, such that the compound flows to void 55 while the compound, void 55, and a volume 120 are under a reduced air pressure.

In system 112, dispenser 58 is a two-part dispenser, with first portion 86 being positioned within vacuum canister 60, at least some of second portion 88 being positioned within vacuum canister 60, and/or at least some of second portion 88 being positioned outside of vacuum canister 60. Dispenser inlet 90 is formed in second portion 88, and dispenser outlet 92 is formed in first portion 86 in some examples. Valve 62 is positioned between first portion 86 of dispenser 58 and second portion 88 of dispenser 58, such that the compound flows from second portion 88, through valve 62, into first portion 86, and then into vacuum canister 60, towards void 55 in some examples. In some examples, as indicated in dashed line, valve 62 is positioned between first portion 86 of dispenser 58 and vacuum canister 60 such that the compound flows from first portion 86, through valve 62, and into vacuum canister 60, towards void 55. Optionally, dispenser 58 is a unitary dispenser, with valve 62 formed therein, such as adjacent dispenser outlet 92.

FIGS. 6-7 illustrate yet another example of system 50, in the form of system 122. FIG. 6 shows first portion 86 of a two-part dispenser 58 being coupled to first outer surface 71 of first skin 68 of sandwich panel 56 (which is an example of structure 54). For example, a dispenser seal 124 is used to form a seal between first portion 86 of dispenser 58 and sandwich panel 56. As shown in FIG. 6, first portion 86 is formed as a substantially cylindrical, hollow, thin-walled structure. First portion 86 is positioned with respect to sandwich panel 56 and void 55 such that dispenser outlet 92 circumscribes void 55. As shown in FIG. 7, first portion 86 is configured to vertically support second portion 88 of dispenser 58, along with compound 52 contained within second portion 88, such that second portion 88 and compound 52 are vertically spaced apart from void 55 and are above structure 54. In this manner, gravity causes compound 52 to flow towards void 55 when valve 62 is moved to allow such flow.

As shown in FIG. 7, dispenser 58 is positioned entirely within volume 120 inside vacuum canister 60 in some examples. Vacuum canister 60 may include canister inlet 82 through which dispenser 58 is inserted (e.g., canister inlet 82 is configured to receive dispenser 58). In such examples, canister inlet 82 is configured to receive compound 52, such as by filling dispenser 58 through canister inlet 82 once dispenser 58 and vacuum canister 60 are positioned with respect to void 55 (e.g., positioned on sandwich panel 56). Additionally or alternatively, in some examples, vacuum canister 60 is placed or positioned on sandwich panel 56, with dispenser 58 passing through canister outlet 84, such as in system 122 where vacuum canister 60 does not include a canister inlet. Lower seal 116 functions to seal vacuum canister 60 to, for example, first outer surface 71 of sandwich panel 56.

In this example, first portion 86 of dispenser 58 includes a first dispenser inlet 90 and a first dispenser outlet 92, while second portion 88 of dispenser 58 includes a second dispenser inlet 90' and a second dispenser outlet 92'. Second portion 88 receives compound 52 through second dispenser inlet 90' and compound exits second portion 88 through second dispenser outlet 92' when valve 62 is moved. Compound 52 then enters first portion 86 through first dispenser inlet 90, and first portion 86 guides compound 52 to void 55

12

by flowing compound 52 through first dispenser outlet 92 adjacent void 55. Valve 62 is positioned between first portion 86 and second portion 88 of dispenser 58, such as between second dispenser outlet 92' of second portion 88 and first dispenser inlet 90 of first portion 86.

FIG. 8 illustrates a portion of sandwich panel 11 with a repaired void 125 having been repaired using conventional methods. As shown in FIG. 8, a compound (e.g., compound 52) has been flowed to the void and is positioned within core 13 and adjacent first skin 15 of sandwich panel 11. However, the repaired void 125 includes several pockets of trapped air 126 between compound 53 and sandwich panel 11 (e.g., between compound 53 and second skin 17, as shown). Such air pockets 126 may require a technician to rework the repair, resulting in time-consuming and costly re-work, and/or scrapping the sandwich panel. By contrast, FIG. 9 illustrates a sandwich panel 56 with a repaired void 127 having been repaired using systems 50 and methods according to the present disclosure. As shown in FIG. 9, compound 52 has completely flowed into sandwich panel 56, such that there are no pockets of air trapped between compound 52 and second skin 70 of sandwich panel 56. Presently disclosed systems and methods may eliminate or reduce pockets of air and trapped air in such sandwich panel repairs.

FIG. 10 schematically provides a flowchart that represents illustrative, non-exclusive examples of methods according to the present disclosure. In FIG. 10, some steps are illustrated in dashed boxes indicating that such steps may be optional or may correspond to an optional version of a method according to the present disclosure. The methods and steps illustrated in FIG. 10 are not limiting and other methods and steps are within the scope of the present disclosure, including methods having greater than or fewer than the number of steps illustrated, as understood from the discussions herein.

FIG. 10 illustrates methods 200 of depositing a compound (e.g., compound 52) within a structure (e.g., structure 54), such as within a void (e.g., void 55) in a sandwich panel (e.g., sandwich panel 56). Method 200 generally includes positioning a vacuum canister (e.g., vacuum canister 60) with respect to the void at 202, reducing the air pressure within the vacuum canister and the void at 204 by drawing air out of the vacuum canister at 205, and moving a valve (e.g., valve 62) at 206 to allow the compound to flow from a dispenser (e.g., dispenser 58) to the void at 208 while at least a portion of the dispenser, at least a portion of the structure, the compound, and the void are under reduced air pressure. Flowing the compound at 208 may include providing a system (e.g., system 50) configured such that the compound flows from the dispenser, into at least a portion of the vacuum canister, and to the void. For example, the compound may flow at 208 through a dispenser outlet, into a canister inlet, and through a canister outlet to the void. After the compound has flowed into the void at 208, and after waiting sufficient time for the compound to settle into the void, but before the compound cures and hardens, the void and compound are exposed to ambient air pressure at 210, whereupon air pockets trapped between the compound and the sandwich panel skin are compressed.

Positioning the vacuum canister at 202 may include positioning the vacuum canister on the structure such that a canister outlet of the vacuum canister (e.g., canister outlet 84) circumscribes the void. In some methods 200, the vacuum canister is positioned such that it rests on the sandwich panel, such as on a first outer surface (e.g., first outer surface 71) of one skin of the sandwich panel. The canister outlet may thus be configured to allow the com-

pound to flow into the void from the dispenser. In some methods **200**, positioning the vacuum canister at **202** may include applying a film, a coating, and/or a seal at **212**, such as applying a film, coating, and/or seal between the structure and the vacuum canister. For example, a seal is applied at **212** to create a substantially air-impermeable interface between the vacuum canister and an outer surface of the sandwich panel on which the vacuum canister is positioned. In this manner, drawing air out of the vacuum canister at **205** may result in a reduced air pressure within the vacuum canister, and thereby in the void.

Reducing the air pressure at **204** includes operating a vacuum pump to maintain a pre-determined reduced air pressure within the vacuum canister for a period of time sufficient for the compound to flow from the dispenser into the void, but less than an amount of time sufficient to allow the compound to cure and harden. For example, a vacuum system (e.g., vacuum system **66**) is operatively coupled to the vacuum canister at **214**, such as via a vacuum port (e.g., vacuum port **64**) coupled to the vacuum canister. Reducing the air pressure at **204** is performed until a desired, or target, reduced air pressure is attained within the vacuum canister.

Moving the valve at **206** includes moving the valve from a first position, in which the valve is operable to retain the compound in the dispenser, to a second position, in which the compound flows from the dispenser, through at least a portion of the vacuum canister, and into the void. The moving the valve at **206** to the second position is performed during a period of time in which the target reduced air pressure is maintained within the vacuum canister, such that the void and the compound are under reduced air pressure while the compound flows to the void. In some methods, moving the valve at **206** includes removing the valve from the dispenser outlet entirely. Moving the valve at **206** may be performed manually or automatically, such as in response to reaching a target reduced air pressure within the vacuum canister. Moving the valve at **206** may be performed before or after the positioning the vacuum canister at **202** and/or before or after positioning the dispenser at **216**.

Some methods **200** may include positioning the dispenser with respect to the vacuum canister at **216** such that, once the valve is moved at **206**, the dispenser is configured to allow the compound to flow from a dispenser outlet of the dispenser (e.g., dispenser outlet **92**) into at least a portion of the vacuum canister, such as through a canister inlet of the vacuum canister (e.g., canister inlet **82**). In some methods **200** where the vacuum canister and dispenser are formed integrally with each other, positioning the vacuum canister at **202** may include positioning both the vacuum canister and the dispenser simultaneously. In some methods **200**, the vacuum canister is positioned on the structure at **202**, and then the dispenser is coupled (e.g., removably coupled) to the vacuum canister at **216** and/or positioned such that at least a portion of the dispenser is positioned in and/or on the vacuum canister. In some methods **200**, the dispenser is positioned on or with respect to the structure and void at **216**, and then the vacuum canister is positioned at **202**, such as by placing the vacuum canister over the dispenser (e.g., the vacuum canister is placed on the structure such that the vacuum canister defines a volume between it and the structure, and the dispenser is contained partially or fully within the volume).

In some methods, positioning the dispenser at **216** includes removably coupling the dispenser to the vacuum canister, such as by placing the dispenser on the vacuum canister, snapping the dispenser to the vacuum canister, applying an adhesive to removably couple the dispenser to

the vacuum canister, applying a sealant to removably couple the dispenser to the vacuum canister, rotating the dispenser onto the vacuum canister, and/or engaging a first feature of the dispenser with a second feature of the vacuum canister. Additionally or alternatively, the positioning the dispenser at **216** includes positioning a first portion of a dispenser on the structure adjacent and/or surrounding the void, sealing the first portion with respect to the structure, and/or positioning and/or removably coupling a second portion of the dispenser with respect to the first portion.

At least a portion of the dispenser is filled with compound at **218**. In some methods **200**, the filling the dispenser at **218** includes closing or sealing the dispenser at **220**, such as by applying a lid or cover to the dispenser after inserting the compound into the dispenser, and/or closing or sealing a dispenser inlet (e.g., dispenser inlet **90**) through which the compound was inserted. Sealing the dispenser at **220** is performed such that the compound is at least substantially prevented from flowing through the dispenser inlet through which it was inserted into the dispenser after the sealing the dispenser at **220**. The dispenser is filled with compound at **218** before or after the dispenser is positioned at **216**, and/or before or after positioning the vacuum canister at **202**. In some methods **200**, the moving the valve at **206** includes positioning the valve in the first position (e.g., closed position) prior to at least partially filling the dispenser with compound at **218**. In some methods **200**, the dispenser is pre-filled with the compound such that the dispenser is filled and sealed before use. In practice, the compound may be deaerated at **222** prior to being inserted into the dispenser (e.g., before the filling at least a portion of the dispenser at **218**).

The exposing the void and the compound to the ambient air pressure at **210** is performed before the compound has dried, cured, and/or gelled. In this manner, the compound is free to continue to flow into the void when exposed to the ambient air pressure at **210**. The exposing the void and the compound to the ambient air pressure at **210** may include, for example, decoupling the vacuum system from the vacuum port, opening the valve, turning off the vacuum system such that air is no longer drawn from the vacuum canister, removing a lid, cover, and/or seal from the dispenser and/or vacuum canister at **224**, using the vacuum system to return air to the vacuum canister at **226**, and/or removing the vacuum canister from the structure at **228**. In some methods **200**, the exposing the void and the compound to the ambient air pressure at **210** includes exposing the void and the compound to ambient air. In some methods **200**, the exposing the void and the compound to the ambient air pressure at **210** includes reversing the vacuum pump such that air is pumped back into the vacuum canister at **226**, via the vacuum system coupled to the vacuum port.

After the compound flows to the void at **208**, the dispenser is removed from the structure at **230** and/or disposed of at **232**. In some methods, both the vacuum canister and the dispenser are disposed of at **232**. Once the dispenser is removed at **230**, other repair steps are performed to repair the void in the structure at **234**. For example, excess compound is removed from the area surrounding the void at **236**, the compound is allowed to dry, cure, and/or gel at **238**, one or more repair plies is applied to the structure at **240**, and/or the area is sanded or buffed at **242**. In some methods **200**, removing the excess compound at **236** is performed before the compound cures or gels at **238**. In some methods **200**, allowing the compound to cure or gel at **238** may include applying heat to the compound.

Methods **200** may include applying one or more films and/or coatings at **244** to the structure, wherein the one or more films and/or coatings are configured to facilitate a seal between the first skin of the structure and the vacuum canister, and/or to facilitate a seal between the first skin of the structure and the dispenser. For example, a temporary plastic film with a sealant may be applied to one or both side of the sandwich panel to improve the ability of the vacuum system to reduce the air pressure within the vacuum canister and the void.

Methods **200** and systems **50** herein described are used to deposit any desired compound at any desired location of a structure.

In examples where one or more components are computer-controlled, such examples may include any suitable device or devices that are configured to perform the functions of a controller. For example, the controller may include one or more of an electronic controller, a dedicated controller, a special-purpose controller, a personal computer, a special-purpose computer, a display device, a logic device, a memory device, and/or a memory device having non-transitory computer readable media suitable for storing computer-executable instructions for implementing aspects of systems and/or methods according to the present disclosure.

As used herein, the terms “selective” and “selectively,” when modifying an action, movement, configuration, or other activity of one or more components or characteristics of an apparatus, mean that the specific action, movement, configuration, or other activity is a direct or indirect result of user manipulation of an aspect of, or one or more components of, the apparatus.

Illustrative, non-exclusive examples of inventive subject matter according to the present disclosure are described in the following enumerated paragraphs:

A1. A system for depositing a compound into a void within a structure, the system comprising:

a dispenser for holding the compound to be dispensed into the void; and

a valve operable in a first position to retain the compound in the dispenser, and operable in a second position to enable the compound to flow into the void while an air pressure within the void is being maintained at a reduced air pressure.

A1.1. The system of paragraph A1, further comprising a vacuum canister comprising a vacuum port configured to enable a vacuum system to reduce an/the air pressure within the vacuum canister and the void to a/the reduced air pressure.

A1.2. The system of paragraph A1.1, wherein the vacuum canister comprises:

a canister inlet configured to allow the compound to flow from the dispenser into at least a portion of the vacuum canister; and

a canister outlet configured to allow the compound to flow into the void, wherein the vacuum canister is configured to be selectively positioned with respect to the void such that the canister outlet circumscribes the void.

A1.3. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A1.2, wherein the dispenser comprises:

a first portion configured to be positioned with respect to the void such that the compound may flow through the first portion to the void where the compound is to be deposited; and

a second portion, wherein the second portion is configured to hold a volume of the compound and deliver the volume of compound to the first portion.

A1.4. The system of paragraph A1.3, wherein the first portion is configured to be positioned on the structure, around the void.

A1.5. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A1.4, wherein the dispenser comprises a dispenser inlet to receive the compound.

A1.6. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A1.5, wherein the dispenser comprises at least one dispenser outlet configured to channel the compound toward the void.

A1.7. The system of paragraph A1.6, wherein the at least one dispenser outlet is configured to channel the compound into a/the vacuum canister.

A1.8. The system of paragraph A1.6 or A1.7, wherein the at least one dispenser outlet is configured to channel the compound from a/the second portion of the dispenser into a/the first portion of the dispenser.

A1.9. The system of any of paragraphs A1.6-A1.8, wherein the at least one dispenser outlet is configured to channel the compound from a/the first portion of the dispenser, through at least a portion of a/the vacuum canister.

A1.10. The system of any of paragraphs A1.6-A1.9, wherein the at least one dispenser outlet is configured to receive the compound into the dispenser.

A1.11. The system of any of paragraphs A1.6-A1.9, wherein the at least one dispenser outlet is different from a/the dispenser inlet configured to receive the compound into the dispenser.

A1.12. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A1.11, wherein the valve is positioned between a/the second portion of the dispenser and a/the first portion of the dispenser.

A1.13. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A1.12, wherein the valve is positioned between a/the first portion of the dispenser and a/the vacuum canister.

A1.14. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A1.13, wherein the valve is positioned between the dispenser and a/the vacuum canister.

A1.15. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A1.14, wherein the dispenser and a/the vacuum canister are formed unitarily with each other.

A1.16. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A1.14, wherein the dispenser is formed separately from a/the vacuum canister.

A1.17. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A1.16, wherein the valve is coupled to the dispenser.

A1.18. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A1.17, wherein the vacuum port is coupled to a/the vacuum canister.

A1.19. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A1.18, wherein an inlet diameter of a/the dispenser inlet is larger than an outlet diameter of a/the dispenser outlet.

A1.20. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A1.19, wherein a first diameter of a/the canister inlet is smaller than a second diameter of a/the canister outlet.

A1.21. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A1.20 wherein the dispenser is configured to be disposable after a single use.

A1.22. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A1.21 wherein the system comprises a/the vacuum canister that is configured to be disposable after a single use.

A1.23. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A1.22, wherein the dispenser is configured such that a/the first portion is selectively removable from a/the second portion.

A1.24. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A1.23, wherein a/the canister inlet is configured to receive at least a portion of the dispenser.

A1.25. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A1.24, wherein a/the canister inlet is configured to receive the compound from the dispenser.

A1.26. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A1.25, wherein the valve is selectively movable such that the compound flows through a/the dispenser outlet when the valve is moved to the second position.

A1.27. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A1.26, wherein a/the vacuum canister is configured to be positioned on the structure.

A1.28. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A1.27, wherein at least a portion of a/the vacuum canister surrounds at least a portion of the dispenser.

A1.29. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A1.28, wherein a/the vacuum canister is configured such that the dispenser is contained within a volume defined between the vacuum canister and the structure.

A1.30. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A1.29, further comprising the vacuum system operatively coupled to a/the vacuum canister, the vacuum system being configured to draw air out of the vacuum canister.

A1.31. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A1.30, wherein the valve is configured to at least substantially prevent flow of the compound through a/the dispenser outlet when the valve is in the first position.

A1.32. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A1.31, wherein the second position of the valve is remote from the dispenser such that the valve is configured to be selectively removable from a/the dispenser outlet, thereby permitting flow of the compound through the dispenser outlet.

A2. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A1.32, wherein a/the first portion of the dispenser is configured to selectively and removably receive at least some of a/the second portion of the dispenser.

A2.1. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A2, wherein a/the vacuum canister is configured to selectively and removably receive at least some of the dispenser.

A2.2. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A2.1, wherein a/the canister inlet of a/the vacuum canister is configured to selectively and removably receive at least some of the dispenser.

A3. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A2.2, wherein a/the second portion of the dispenser is configured to be removably placed on a/the first portion of the dispenser.

A4. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A3, wherein a/the second portion of the dispenser is configured to be removably coupled to a/the first portion of the dispenser.

A5. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A2.2, wherein a/the first portion of the dispenser and a/the second portion of the dispenser are integrally formed.

A6. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A5, wherein the valve is selectively replaceable on a/the dispenser outlet.

A7. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A6, wherein the valve comprises one or more of a tape, an adhesive, a hinge, a sliding structure, a cover, a pivoting structure, and a snap-fit structure.

A8. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A7, wherein the valve is configured to be moved to the second position remotely.

A9. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A7, wherein the valve is configured to be manually moved to the second position.

A9.1. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A9, wherein the valve is configured to be automatically moved to the second position once a target reduced air pressure is reached inside a/the vacuum canister.

A9.2. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A9.1, wherein the valve is configured to be selectively moved to the second position when a/the vacuum canister is positioned over the dispenser.

A9.3. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A9.1, wherein the valve is configured to be selectively moved to the second position when a/the second portion of the dispenser is placed on a/the first portion of the dispenser.

A9.4. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A9.1, wherein the valve is configured to be selectively moved to the second position when the dispenser is positioned with respect to a/the vacuum canister.

A9.5. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A9.4, wherein the valve is configured to be selectively moved to the second position by an actuator.

A10. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A9.5, wherein the dispenser is configured to contain a/the volume of compound that is sufficient to repair the void.

A11. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A10, wherein the vacuum system is configured to reduce the air pressure within a/the vacuum canister until the air pressure within the vacuum canister reaches a target reduced air pressure.

A12. The system of paragraph A11, wherein the target reduced air pressure is at least partially determined by the viscosity of the compound.

A13. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A12, wherein the vacuum system is configured to reduce the air pressure within a/the vacuum canister at a prescribed rate of decrease.

A14. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A13, wherein the vacuum system is configured to maintain a/the target reduced air pressure for a prescribed duration of time.

A15. The system of paragraph A14, wherein the prescribed duration of time is sufficient for the compound to flow into the void from the dispenser, but not so long that the compound cures and hardens.

A16. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A15, wherein the vacuum system is configured to restore ambient air pressure within a/the vacuum canister at a prescribed rate.

A17. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A16, wherein the vacuum system is manually controlled.

A18. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A16, wherein the vacuum system is computer-controlled.

A19. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A18, wherein a/the vacuum canister comprises a seal configured to create an at least substantially air-impermeable seal between the structure and the vacuum canister.

A20. The system of paragraph A19, wherein the seal comprises a gasket, a sealant tape, an adhesive, a sealant compound, and/or a film.

A21. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A20, wherein a/the first portion of the dispenser comprises a cylinder.

A22. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A21, wherein a/the first portion of the dispenser comprises a first opening configured to be positioned adjacent the structure.

A23. The system of paragraph A22, wherein the first portion of the dispenser is configured to be positioned with respect to the structure such that the first opening faces the structure.

A24. The system of paragraph A22 or A23, wherein the first portion is configured to be removably coupled to the structure, adjacent the first opening.

A25. The system of paragraph A24, wherein the first portion is configured to be coupled to the structure with one or more of a gasket, a seal, a fitting, a film, a coating, an adhesive, a sealant, and a tape.

A26. The system of any of paragraphs A22-A25, wherein the first opening is approximately the same size and shape of the void.

A27. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A26, wherein a/the canister outlet is approximately the same size and shape of the void.

A28. The system of any of paragraphs A22-A26, wherein the first portion comprises a second opening opposite the first opening, and wherein a/the second portion of the dispenser is configured to be positioned adjacent the second opening of the first portion.

A28.1. The system of paragraph A28, wherein the second portion is configured to be positioned such that a/the dispenser outlet is adjacent the second opening of the first portion of the dispenser.

A29. The system of paragraph A28 or A28.1, wherein the dispenser is configured to guide the compound from the second portion, through the dispenser outlet of the second portion, into the first portion, through the first opening of the first portion, and into or onto the structure.

A30. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A29, wherein a/the first portion of the dispenser is a hollow, thin-walled first tool portion.

A31. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A30, wherein a/the first portion of the dispenser is configured to vertically support a/the second portion of the dispenser, above the structure.

A32. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A31, wherein a/the first portion of the dispenser is sized to accommodate the volume of compound.

A33. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A32, wherein a/the second portion of the dispenser comprises a funnel.

A34. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A33, wherein a/the second portion of the dispenser is sized to hold a sufficient volume of compound to repair the void.

A35. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A34, wherein the valve is configured to restrict the flow of the compound through a/the dispenser outlet while a/the second portion of the dispenser is filled with the compound and the valve is in the first position.

A36. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A35, wherein the system is configured to deposit a potting compound within the void.

A37. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A36, wherein the structure comprises a honeycomb panel, and wherein the system is configured to deposit the compound within the honeycomb panel.

A38. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A37, wherein the system is configured to repair a/the honeycomb panel.

A39. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A38, wherein the system is configured to insert a/the potting compound into a/the honeycomb panel such that the potting compound is significantly devoid of pores and entrapped air.

A40. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A39, wherein the system is configured to insert a/the potting compound into a/the honeycomb panel such that the potting compound has a porosity of less than 10%, less than 5%, and/or less than 1% after curing.

A41. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A40, further comprising the structure.

A42. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A41, wherein the structure comprises a/the honeycomb panel having a first skin, a second skin, and a core extending there between, wherein the dispenser is configured to be placed on the first skin such that the first tool portion is substantially sealed to the first skin, and wherein the system is configured to deposit the compound into a portion of the core.

A43. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A42, wherein the structure comprises a hollow-core structural material.

A44. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A43, wherein the structure comprises a damaged portion to be repaired using the compound.

A45. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A44, further comprising the compound.

A46. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A45, wherein the compound comprises a potting compound.

A47. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A46, wherein the compound is configured to repair a/the honeycomb panel, a/the hollow-core panel, and/or another structural material.

A48. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A47, wherein the compound has a viscosity such that it is configured to flow through the outlet of the second tool portion.

A49. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A48, wherein the compound is configured to flow into the structure.

A50. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A49, wherein the compound is configured to flow freely into one or more interior spaces of the structure, under ambient pressure.

A51. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A50, wherein the dispenser comprises a removable lid configured to selectively cover a/the dispenser inlet, such that the dispenser inlet may receive compound into the dispenser when the removable lid is removed, and such that the removable lid is configured to prevent the compound from flowing through the dispenser inlet when the removable lid is covering the dispenser inlet.

A52. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A51, wherein the system comprises a dispenser seal configured to selectively seal a/the dispenser inlet, such that the dispenser inlet may receive compound into the dispenser before the dispenser inlet is sealed with the dispenser seal, and such that the dispenser seal is configured to prevent the compound from flowing through the dispenser inlet once the dispenser inlet is sealed with the dispenser seal.

A53. The system of any of paragraphs A1-A52, wherein the dispenser is pre-filled with the compound.

B1. A method for depositing a compound into a void within a structure, the method comprising:

positioning a vacuum canister with respect to the void such that a canister outlet of the vacuum canister circumscribes the void, the canister outlet being configured to allow the compound to flow into the void from a dispenser configured to hold the compound;

using a vacuum system to draw air out of the vacuum canister and the void to maintain a target reduced air pressure within the vacuum canister, wherein the vacuum system is operably coupled to the vacuum canister via a vacuum port; and

moving a valve from a first position, in which the valve is operable to retain the compound in the dispenser, to a second position, in which the compound flows from the dispenser, through at least a portion of the vacuum canister, and into the void, wherein the moving the valve to the second position is performed during a period of time in which the target reduced air pressure is maintained, and wherein the period of time is sufficient to allow the compound to flow into the void, and not so long that the compound cures and hardens.

B1.1. The method of paragraph B1, further comprising positioning the dispenser with respect to the vacuum canister such that the dispenser is configured to allow the compound to flow from a dispenser outlet of the dispenser into the vacuum canister once the moving the valve to the second position is performed.

21

B1.2. The method of paragraph B1 or B1.1, further comprising filling at least a portion of the dispenser with the compound.

B1.3. The method of paragraph B1.2, wherein the filling at least a portion of the dispenser with the compound is performed prior to the positioning the vacuum canister with respect to the void.

B1.4. The method of any of paragraphs B1.2-B1.3, further comprising positioning the valve in the first position prior to the filling at least the portion of the dispenser with the compound.

B1.5. The method of any of paragraphs B1.2-B1.4, further comprising closing a dispenser inlet through which the portion of the dispenser is filled, such that the compound is substantially prevented from flowing through the dispenser inlet after the closing the dispenser inlet.

B1.6. The method of any of paragraphs B1-B1.5, further comprising exposing the compound and the void to ambient air pressure after the period of time during which the target reduced air pressure is maintained, wherein the exposing the compound and the void to ambient air pressure is performed before the compound has cured.

B1.7. The method of paragraph B1.6, wherein the exposing the compound and the void to ambient air pressure comprises releasing the vacuum.

B1.8. The method of paragraph B1.6 or B1.7, wherein the exposing the compound and the void to ambient air pressure comprises removing the vacuum canister such that the void is exposed to ambient air.

B1.9. The method of paragraph B1.8, wherein the removing the vacuum canister is performed before the compound has gelled.

B1.10. The method of any of paragraphs B1.6-B1.9, wherein the exposing the compound and the void to the ambient air pressure comprises reversing the vacuum pump such that air is pumped into the vacuum canister, thereby increasing the air pressure from the target reduced air pressure.

B1.11. The method of any of paragraphs B1.6-B1.10, wherein the exposing the compound and the void to ambient air pressure comprises removing a removable lid from the dispenser, thereby exposing the void and the compound to ambient air.

B1.12. The method of any of paragraphs B1-B1.11, further comprising disposing of the dispenser after the compound flows into the void.

B1.13. The method of any of paragraphs B1-B1.12, further comprising positioning the dispenser with respect to the void.

B1.14. The method of any of paragraphs B1-B1.13, further comprising placing the vacuum canister on the structure such that the vacuum canister defines a volume between it and the structure, wherein the dispenser is contained within the volume.

B1.15. The method of any of paragraphs B1-B1.14, further comprising disposing of the vacuum canister after the compound flows into the void.

B2. The method of any of paragraphs B1-B1.15, comprising flowing the compound through the dispenser while the dispenser is under vacuum.

B3. The method of any of paragraphs B1-B2, comprising flowing the compound through the dispenser while at least a portion of the structure is under reduced air pressure.

B4. The method of any of paragraphs B1-B3, wherein the structure comprises a first skin, a second skin, and a core extending there between, wherein the method comprises

22

flowing the compound to at least a portion of the core of the structure, while the void is under reduced air pressure.

B5. The method of any of paragraphs B1-B4, wherein the method comprises flowing the compound through the dispenser while the compound is under reduced air pressure.

B6. The method of any of paragraphs B1-B5, further comprising operatively coupling the vacuum system to the vacuum canister.

B7. The method of any of paragraphs B1-B6, wherein the using the vacuum system to draw air out of the vacuum canister comprises reducing the air pressure in the dispenser, the compound, and at least a portion of the structure.

B8. The method of any of paragraphs B1-B7, wherein the positioning the vacuum canister, using the vacuum system to draw air out of the vacuum canister, and/or the moving the valve are performed using the system of any of paragraphs A1-A53.

B9. The method of any of paragraphs B1-B8, comprising positioning a/the first portion of the dispenser on the structure, adjacent the void.

B10. The method of any of paragraphs B1-B9, comprising positioning a/the first portion of the dispenser on the structure such that it surrounds the void.

B11. The method of any of paragraphs B1-B10, wherein a portion of the core is exposed through the void.

B12. The method of any of paragraphs B1-B11, wherein the void corresponds to a damaged portion of the structure.

B13. The method of any of paragraphs B1-B12, comprising sealing a/the first portion of the dispenser with respect to the structure.

B14. The method of paragraph B13, wherein the sealing the first portion with respect to the structure comprises sealing the first portion with respect to a/the first surface of the structure, such that the first portion surrounds the void.

B15. The method of paragraph B13 or B14, wherein the sealing the first portion with respect to the structure comprises placing a sealant tape, a gasket, and/or a fitting at an intersection of the first portion and the structure, such that a removable, substantially air-impermeable seal is formed at the intersection of the first portion and the structure.

B16. The method of any of paragraphs B1-B15, comprising positioning a/the second portion of the dispenser with respect to a/the first portion.

B17. The method of any of paragraphs B1-B16, comprising removably coupling a/the second portion of the dispenser to a/the first portion of the dispenser.

B18. The method of paragraph B17, wherein the removably coupling the second portion to the first portion comprises one or more of placing the second portion on the first portion, snapping the second portion to the first portion, applying an adhesive to removably couple the second portion to the first portion, applying a sealant to removably couple the second portion to the first portion, rotating a first feature of the first portion with a second feature of the second portion.

B18.1. The method of any of paragraphs B1-B18, comprising removably coupling the dispenser to the vacuum canister.

B18.2. The method of paragraph B18.1, wherein the removably coupling the dispenser to the vacuum canister comprises one or more of placing the dispenser on the vacuum canister, snapping the dispenser to the vacuum canister, applying an adhesive to removably couple the dispenser to the vacuum canister, applying a sealant to removably couple the dispenser to the vacuum canister,

rotating the dispenser onto the vacuum canister, and engaging a first feature of the dispenser with a second feature of the vacuum canister.

B19. The method of any of paragraphs B1-B18.2, comprising placing a volume of the compound in a/the second portion of the dispenser.

B20. The method of paragraph B19, wherein, when depending from paragraph B17, the placing the volume of compound in the second portion of the dispenser is performed before the removably coupling the second portion to the first portion of the dispenser.

B21. The method of paragraph B19, wherein, when depending from paragraph B17, the placing the volume of compound in the second portion of the dispenser is performed after the removably coupling the second portion to the first portion of the dispenser.

B22. The method of any of paragraphs B1-B21, further comprising moving the valve with respect to the dispenser, thereby exposing at least a portion of a/the dispenser outlet.

B23. The method of paragraph B22, wherein the moving the valve comprises removing the valve from the dispenser.

B23.1. The method of paragraph B22 or B23, wherein the moving the valve comprises removing the valve from a/the second portion of the dispenser.

B24. The method of any of paragraphs B22-B23.1, wherein the moving the valve is performed before the positioning the vacuum canister.

B25. The method of any of paragraphs B22-B23.1, wherein the moving the valve is performed after the positioning the vacuum canister.

B26. The method of any of paragraphs B22-B25, wherein, when depending from any of paragraphs B16-B18, the moving the valve is performed after the positioning the second portion of the dispenser with respect to the first portion of the dispenser.

B27. The method of any of paragraphs B22-B25, wherein, when depending from any of paragraphs B16-B18, the moving the valve is performed before the positioning the second portion of the dispenser with respect to the first portion of the dispenser.

B28. The method of any of paragraphs B22-B27, wherein, when depending from any of paragraphs B16-B18, the positioning the second portion of the dispenser with respect to the first portion of the dispenser automatically causes the moving the valve.

B29. The method of any of paragraphs B1-B28, further comprising removing the vacuum canister, wherein the removing the vacuum canister is performed after the moving the valve to the second position and flowing the compound into the void.

B30. The method of any of paragraphs B1-B29, further comprising removing the dispenser from the structure, wherein the removing the dispenser is performed after the moving the valve to the second position and flowing the compound into the void.

B31. The method of any of paragraphs B1-B30, further comprising allowing the compound to cure, and applying one or more repair plies to the structure, wherein the repair plies are configured to repair the void in the structure.

B32. The method of any of paragraphs B1-B31, comprising flowing the compound to the void simultaneously with the applying the vacuum.

B33. The method of any of paragraphs B1-B32, wherein the method comprises using the system of any of paragraphs A1-A53.

B34. The method of any of paragraphs B1-B33, wherein the using the vacuum system to reduce the air pressure is performed until a desired reduced air pressure is attained within the vacuum canister.

B35. The method of paragraph B34, wherein the using the vacuum system to reduce the air pressure is performed such that the target reduced air pressure is maintained within the vacuum canister for a prescribed period of time.

B36. The method of any of paragraphs B1-B35, further comprising returning air to the vacuum canister to restore ambient air pressure within the vacuum canister.

B37. The method of paragraph B36, wherein the returning air to the vacuum canister is performed at a prescribed rate.

B38. The method of any of paragraphs B36-B37, wherein the returning air to the vacuum canister is performed until the air pressure within the vacuum canister is approximately equal to ambient.

B39. The method of any of paragraphs B36-B38, further comprising removing the vacuum canister, wherein the removing the vacuum canister is performed after the returning air to the vacuum canister.

B40. The method of any of paragraphs B36-B39, further comprising removing the dispenser from the structure, wherein the removing the dispenser is performed after the returning air to the vacuum canister.

B41. The method of any of paragraphs B1-B40, wherein the method comprises repairing a portion of a honeycomb panel.

B42. The method of any of paragraphs B1-B41, wherein the structure comprises a/the honeycomb panel having a/the first skin, a/the second skin, and a/the core extending there between, wherein the method further comprises removing one or more plies of material to expose a portion of the core, thereby forming a/the void through the first skin and a portion of the core.

B43. The method of any of paragraphs B1-B42, further comprising placing one or more plies of repair material over a/the void in the structure, wherein the placing the one or more plies of repair material is performed after the compound has cured.

B44. The method of any of paragraphs B1-B43, further comprising applying one or more films to a/the first surface of the structure, wherein the one or more films are configured to facilitate a/the seal between a/the first skin of the structure and the vacuum canister, and/or to facilitate a/the seal between the first skin of the structure and the dispenser and/or between the first skin of the structure and the vacuum canister.

B45. The method of any of paragraphs B1-B44, further comprising applying one or more coatings to a/the first surface of the structure, wherein the one or more coatings are configured to facilitate a/the seal between a/the first skin of the structure and the vacuum canister, and/or to facilitate a/the seal between the first skin of the structure and the dispenser and/or between the first skin of the structure and the vacuum canister.

B46. The method of any of paragraphs B1-B45, further comprising removing excess compound from an area adjacent the void, after the compound gels.

B47. The method of any of paragraphs B1-B46, further comprising removing excess compound from an/the area adjacent the void, after the compound cures.

B48. The method of any of paragraphs B1-B47, further comprising sanding an/the area adjacent the void, wherein the sanding is performed after flowing the compound into the void.

B49. The method of any of paragraphs B1-B48, further comprising applying heat to the compound to cure the compound.

C1. The use of the system of any of paragraphs A1-A53 to apply the compound to the void in the structure.

C2. The use according to paragraph C1, wherein the compound comprises a potting compound.

C3. The use according to paragraph C1 or C2, wherein the structure comprises a honeycomb panel.

C4. The use according to any of paragraphs C1-C3, to repair a/the damaged portion of the structure.

D1. A method, comprising:

using the system of any of paragraphs A1-A53 to deposit the compound at a desired location of the structure;

removing the system from the structure; and
curing the compound.

D2. The method of paragraph D1, further comprising any of the steps of paragraphs B1-B55.

As used herein, the terms “adapted” and “configured” mean that the element, component, or other subject matter is designed and/or intended to perform a given function. Thus, the use of the terms “adapted” and “configured” should not be construed to mean that a given element, component, or other subject matter is simply “capable of” performing a given function but that the element, component, and/or other subject matter is specifically selected, created, implemented, utilized, programmed, and/or designed for the purpose of performing the function. It is also within the scope of the present disclosure that elements, components, and/or other recited subject matter that is recited as being adapted to perform a particular function may additionally or alternatively be described as being configured to perform that function, and vice versa. Similarly, subject matter that is recited as being configured to perform a particular function may additionally or alternatively be described as being operative to perform that function.

The various disclosed elements of systems and steps of methods disclosed herein are not required to all systems and methods according to the present disclosure, and the present disclosure includes all novel and non-obvious combinations and subcombinations of the various elements and steps disclosed herein. Moreover, one or more of the various elements and steps disclosed herein may define independent inventive subject matter that is separate and apart from the whole of a disclosed system or method. Accordingly, such inventive subject matter is not required to be associated with the specific systems and methods that are expressly disclosed herein, and such inventive subject matter may find utility in systems and/or methods that are not expressly disclosed herein.

The invention claimed is:

1. A device for depositing a compound into a void of a damaged area of a structure, the device comprising:

a dispenser for holding the compound to be dispensed into the void;

a vacuum canister, comprising:

a canister inlet configured to allow the compound to flow from the dispenser into at least a portion of the vacuum canister;

a canister outlet configured to allow the compound to flow into the void, wherein the vacuum canister is sized and configured to be selectively positioned with respect to an opening of the void such that the canister outlet surrounds the opening to the void;

a lower seal configured to create an at least substantially air-impermeable seal between the canister outlet and the structure; and

a vacuum port configured to enable a vacuum system to reduce an air pressure within the vacuum canister and the void to a reduced air pressure; and

a valve operable in a first position to retain the compound in the dispenser, and operable in a second position to enable the compound to flow into the void, via the canister outlet, while the air pressure within the vacuum canister and the void is being maintained at the reduced air pressure, wherein at least a portion of the valve is positioned within the vacuum canister.

2. The device according to claim 1, wherein the dispenser comprises a dispenser inlet to receive the compound and a dispenser outlet to channel the compound to the vacuum canister, the dispenser inlet being different from the dispenser outlet.

3. The device according to claim 2, wherein an inlet diameter of the dispenser inlet is larger than an outlet diameter of the dispenser outlet.

4. A device for depositing a compound into a void within a structure, the device comprising:

a dispenser for holding the compound to be dispensed into the void;

a vacuum canister, comprising:

a canister inlet configured to allow the compound to flow from the dispenser into at least a portion of the vacuum canister;

a canister outlet configured to allow the compound to flow into the void, wherein the vacuum canister is configured to be selectively positioned with respect to the void such that the canister outlet circumscribes the void, wherein at least a portion of the dispenser is positioned within the vacuum canister;

a lower seal configured to create an at least substantially air-impermeable seal between the canister outlet and the structure; and

a vacuum port configured to enable a vacuum system to reduce an air pressure within the vacuum canister and the void to a reduced air pressure; and

a valve operable in a first position to retain the compound in the dispenser, and operable in a second position to enable the compound to flow into the void while the air pressure within the vacuum canister and the void is being maintained at the reduced air pressure.

5. The device according to claim 4, wherein the dispenser is formed separately from the vacuum canister, wherein the valve is coupled to the dispenser, and wherein the vacuum port is coupled to the vacuum canister.

6. The device according to claim 4, wherein the dispenser and the vacuum canister are configured to be disposable after a single use.

7. The device according to claim 4, wherein the dispenser comprises a first part configured to hold the compound and a second part configured to guide the compound from the first part into the vacuum canister, wherein the valve is coupled to the second part, and wherein the valve is configured to retain the compound in the first part of the dispenser when the valve is in the first position.

8. The device according to claim 7, wherein the dispenser is configured such that the first part is selectively removable from the second part.

9. The device according to claim 4, wherein the canister inlet is configured to selectively and removably receive at least a portion of the dispenser.

10. A device for depositing a compound into a void within a structure, the device comprising:

a dispenser for holding the compound to be dispensed into the void, wherein the dispenser comprises a dispenser

inlet to receive the compound and a dispenser outlet to channel the compound to a vacuum canister, the dispenser inlet being different from the dispenser outlet; the vacuum canister, comprising:

- a canister inlet configured to allow the compound to flow from the dispenser into at least a portion of the vacuum canister;
- a canister outlet configured to allow the compound to flow into the void, wherein the vacuum canister is configured to be selectively positioned with respect to the void such that the canister outlet circumscribes the void;
- a lower seal configured to create an at least substantially air-impermeable seal between the canister outlet and the structure; and
- a vacuum port configured to enable a vacuum system to reduce an air pressure within the vacuum canister and the void to a reduced air pressure; and
- a valve operable in a first position to retain the compound in the dispenser, and operable in a second position to enable the compound to flow into the void while the air pressure within the vacuum canister and the void is being maintained at the reduced air pressure, wherein the dispenser inlet is positioned outside of the vacuum canister, wherein the dispenser outlet is positioned within the vacuum canister, and wherein the device further comprises a seal adjacent the canister inlet, wherein the seal is configured to substantially prevent air from passing between the seal and the dispenser when the dispenser is at least partially inserted into the vacuum canister through the canister inlet.

11. A device for depositing a compound into a void of a damaged area of a structure, the device comprising:

- a dispenser for holding the compound to be dispensed into the void, wherein the dispenser comprises a dispenser outlet configured to channel the compound to a vacuum canister, wherein the dispenser comprises a dispenser inlet configured to receive the compound into the dispenser, wherein the dispenser inlet is the same as the dispenser outlet, and wherein the dispenser is configured to be selectively operatively coupled to the vacuum canister such that the dispenser is spaced apart from the vacuum canister when the compound is placed in the dispenser and such that the dispenser is operatively coupled to the vacuum canister when the compound is channeled through the dispenser outlet to the vacuum canister;

the vacuum canister, comprising:

- a canister inlet coupled to and adjacent the dispenser outlet when the compound is channeled through the dispenser outlet to the vacuum canister, wherein the canister inlet is configured to allow the compound to

flow from the dispenser outlet into the vacuum canister, and wherein the canister inlet has a first diameter;

- a canister outlet configured to allow the compound to flow into the void, wherein the vacuum canister is sized and configured to be selectively positioned with respect to an opening of the void such that the canister outlet surrounds the opening of the void, wherein the canister outlet has a second diameter, and wherein the second diameter is at least as big as the first diameter; and
- a vacuum port configured to enable a vacuum system to reduce an air pressure within the vacuum canister and the void to a reduced air pressure; and
- a valve operable in a first position to retain the compound in the dispenser, and operable in a second position to enable the compound to flow into the vacuum canister and into the void, via the canister outlet, while the air pressure within the vacuum canister and the void is being maintained at the reduced air pressure.

12. The device according to claim **11**, wherein the dispenser is formed unitarily with the vacuum canister.

13. The device according to claim **11**, wherein the first diameter of the canister inlet is smaller than the second diameter of the canister outlet.

14. The device according to claim **13**, wherein an inlet diameter of the dispenser inlet is larger than an outlet diameter of the dispenser outlet.

15. The device according to claim **11**, wherein the dispenser comprises a dispenser seal and a dispenser inlet, wherein the dispenser seal is configured to selectively seal the dispenser inlet, wherein the dispenser inlet is configured to receive the compound into the dispenser before the dispenser inlet is sealed with the dispenser seal, wherein the dispenser seal is configured to prevent the compound from flowing through the dispenser inlet once the dispenser inlet is sealed with the dispenser seal, and wherein the valve is configured to prevent the compound from flowing through the dispenser outlet when the valve is in the first position such that the dispenser is configured to receive the compound while the dispenser outlet is coupled to the canister inlet of the vacuum canister.

16. The device according to claim **11**, wherein the dispenser comprises a dispenser inlet configured to receive the compound, and wherein the dispenser inlet is opposite from the dispenser outlet.

17. The device according to claim **11**, further comprising a lower seal configured to create an at least substantially air-impermeable seal between the canister outlet and the structure.

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